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Treadmill Exercise Test

Exercise testing measures the functional performance of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. In most cases, the test is carried out to assist in making the diagnosis of coronary artery disease. Before being tested you will be questioned by medical personnel, and a resting electrocardiogram will be recorded. Exercise testing then consists of walking on a treadmill with the speed and gradient increased every two to three minutes until the end of the set protocol is reached or ending earlier if your exercise capacity is reached. This would be indicated by the development of fatigue, breathlessness, chest discomfort or other symptoms. Your heart rate, blood pressure and electrocardiogram will be monitored carefully.

If anytime during the test you feel unwell in anyway, report your symptoms immediately.

There are occasional complications of exercise testing, including significant changes in heart rhythm (about 1 in 2,000 tests) and more rarely, severe chest pain or a heart attack (about 1 in 3,000 tests). Unfortunately, there is also a very small risk of death occurring because of an exercise stress test (about 1 in 10,000 tests), although the risk of both complications and death may be higher in patients who are already known to have severe coronary artery disease. Trained personnel will be present during the test and will closely monitor your electrocardiogram, regularly check your heart rate and blood pressure. Emergency equipment and additional trained personnel are always available to assist if necessary.